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deadly nightshade, and *Stramonium*, or thorn-apple, are plants the leaves of which are used in medicine.

" Q. From whence is the potato, or *Solanum tuberosum*, supposed to have come originally?

" A. It is supposed that the potato is a native of the New World, and was first brought to Britain by Sir Walter Raleigh.* For a long period this useful root was only reared in gardens as a rare vegetable, and was not brought into general use till about the beginning of the 18th century. In the year 1728, a cottar of the name of Thomas Prentice in Stirlingshire reared potatoes in his small garden, and was the means of making them generally known throughout the country.

" Q. Is the potato cultivated in other countries?

" A. Fortunately this useful plant can bear the extremes, and thrives in the soil of almost every climate of the globe. Its cultivation throughout Europe and America is now very general; and in some places, as in Ireland, it forms almost the whole support of the natives."

THE TEA-PLANT.

" Q. What belongs to the next family, or *Ternstrœmiaceæ*?

" A. This family is remarkable for containing the tea-plant.

" Q. Describe the appearance of the tea-plant.

" A. The *thea*, or tea plant, is a low shrub, with a small lance-formed leaf, and a blossom somewhat resembling that of the wild rose, but smaller. It is a native of China and Japan, and is there made an object of culture. It is propagated by seeds, and so uncertain is their vegetation, that seven or eight of these are sown in each hole to ensure one plant. The shrubs are planted in rows, and the ground between carefully weeded. The first crop of leaves is not collected till the third year after sowing.

" Q. How are these leaves prepared?

" A. They are picked off the shrubs and placed in shallow baskets, and exposed to the air or sunshine for some hours; they are then placed in a flat cast iron pan, over a stove heated with charcoal, and stirred about quickly till they dry. After this they are put into baskets, and rubbed between the fingers, until they are rolled up into the form in which tea is brought to market.

" Q. How are the different kinds of tea obtained?

" A. The tea so extensively consumed in Europe is produced by different species of *thea* and *camellia*. According to some botanists, however, there is but one species of tea-plant, and all the varieties of tea depend upon the quality of the leaves, and the situation where they have grown. These are picked from the plant four times in the year. The first, or green tender leaves, form the green tea; the second and third ordinary teas; and the last picking, when the leaves are dry and old, is the least valued.

" Q. When was the use of tea first adopted?

" A. The Chinese have used an infusion of this herb from time immemorial; but it was first introduced into Europe by the Dutch in 1666, in small quantity. Since that period its use has become so general in Britain, that no less than 29,495,199 pounds are annually consumed."

In this way nearly every tree, shrub, plant, and root, at all known in these countries, is treated of and explained; and the entire is closed by the following simple directions for preparing an herbarium:—

" Q. How are plants preserved so as to form an herbarium?

" A. All plants to be so preserved must be taken when in blossom. The best specimens are to be selected, and, when practicable, a piece of the root, the stem with its leaves and the flower blossom fully expanded, so as the whole characters of the specimen may be properly seen. If the plant be too large for this, a portion showing the flowers and a few of the leaves will be sufficient. Having thus collected the specimens required, they are to be placed in a tin-box and carried home.

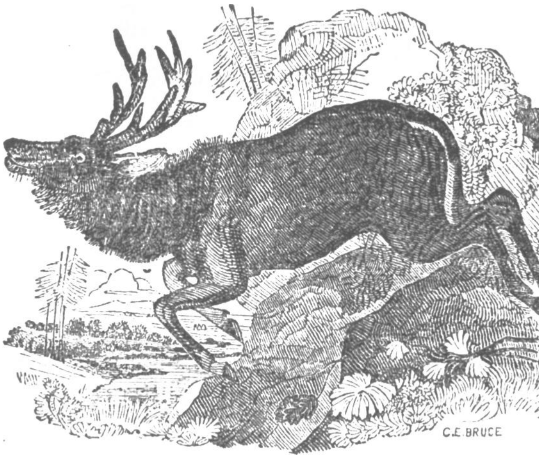
" Q. How do we proceed with them afterwards?

" A. The different specimens, after their characters and names have been ascertained and noted down, together with the locality where they were found, are to be laid on sheets of common smooth paper, carefully placing the blossoms and leaves in their exact positions. Several sheets of paper are to be laid between every two specimens; boards of the same size are to be placed above and below; and a weight, sufficient to keep the leaves and stems flat, is to be placed above all. The weight at first should not be too great, as it is apt to bruise the stem and leaves, and to press out the juice. As they dry gradually, they may be examined after the lapse of a few days; the paper may be changed if damp, and any irregularities of position rectified. They should be deposited in an airy shaded place, removed from the sunshine.

" Q. How are the specimens to be next treated?

" A. When sufficiently dry, they are to be affixed to sheets of paper by means of a little mucilage or glue; or narrow slips of paper, pasted over the principal stems, will keep them firm in a proper position. They are afterwards to be washed over with a weak solution of corrosive sublimate in spirits of wine, about five grains to the ounce, with the addition of five grains of camphor, which will brighten their colours, and preserve them from the attacks of insects. After the names are affixed below the plants, with the places where each was found, and any other interesting information regarding them, the whole are to be arranged according to orders and genera, and, if kept in a moderately dry apartment, the collection may be preserved for many years."

On the whole, we can recommend the Catechism of Botany, as being one of the best and cheapest of its kind that we have seen.



THE RUSA DEER

Is an inhabitant of the jungles and forests of continental India, and the islands of the Eastern Archipelago. There are several varieties of the species. The great rusa is remarkable for the ample mane with which its neck is clothed. It varies from three to three and a half feet in height, and is covered with a thick coat of dry, frizzled hair, which is generally of a dirty brown, inclining to black.

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* " Among the anecdotes told of this enterprising voyager, it is said, that when his gardener at Youghal in the county of Cork had reared to the full maturity of 'apples' the potatoes which he had received from the knight as a fine fruit from America, the man brought to his master one of the apples, and asked if *that* were the fine fruit. Sir Walter, having examined it, was, or feigned to be, so dissatisfied, that he ordered the weed to be rooted out. The gardener obeyed, and in rooting out the weeds found a bushel of potatoes."

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